

PROCEEDINGS
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COMMENTS ON THE TYPE-SPECIMEN OF *NEOTOMA*
DESERTORUM SOLA MERRIAM 1894
(MAMMALIA: RODENTIA)

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This report includes a clear definition of the type-specimen of *Neotoma desertorum sola*. Also presented is a chronological review of the nomenclatorial history of the taxon.

The description of *Neotoma desertorum sola* by Merriam (1894) included limited details of several external morphological features and four external measurements. In addition, remarks were made about several conspicuous cranial characters. A holotype, skin and skull, (USNM 31516/43381) was designated in the account.

Goldman (1910) placed *Neotoma desertorum sola* in synonymy with *Neotoma intermedia gilva* on the basis of pelage features. In this account, Goldman (1910) expressed an opinion that the holotype of *Neotoma desertorum sola* was a composite specimen. The "*Neotoma lepida* group" of wood rats was formed by Goldman (1932) by combining the "*Neotoma desertorum* group" and the "*Neotoma intermedia* group" as they were recognized at the time. No mention was made of the opinion expressed previously with regard to the holotype of *Neotoma desertorum sola*.

The holotype of *Neotoma desertorum sola* is clearly a composite specimen; the skin is an example of *Neotoma lepida gilva*. The skin is designated herein as the lectotype of *Neotoma desertorum sola* Merriam. This designation is made with the assumption, based on the following facts, that the data

on the label are associated correctly with the skin. The skin carries a Death Valley Expedition label, that has been colored red, with the place and date of capture, sex, the name of the collector, and the museum and collector's numbers given in the original description (Merriam, 1894). A second label attached to the skin is a red tag used routinely for type-specimens of the Biological Survey Collections housed in the United States National Museum of Natural History. This label bears the museum number, name of the taxon, and a complete reference to the original description.

The lectotype is very similar to the skin of another specimen of *Neotoma lepida gilva* (USNM 31517/43382) obtained at the same locality by the same collector 1 day before the lectotype was collected. Measurements of this specimen, a female, were included in the original description of *Neotoma desertorum sola* (Merriam, 1894). Presumably, this is the same specimen that Goldman (1910) referred to as "... a topotype taken at the same time." Examination of the records reveals that these two specimens of *Neotoma lepida gilva*, as well as a specimen of *Neotoma fuscipes simplex* (USNM 31515/43380) collected on October 25, 1891, at the same locality, were catalogued on November 25, 1891.

The lectotype does not belong with the skull that is matched with it. The skull (USNM 43381) is from a specimen of *Neotoma fuscipes*; it compares closely with skulls of *Neotoma fuscipes macrotis* from San Bernardino, California, some of which were obtained during the Death Valley Expedition.

A review of the pertinent synonymy involving *Neotoma desertorum sola* is as follows:

Neotoma lepida gilva Rhoads

- 1894. *Neotoma intermedia gilva* Rhoads, American Nat., 28:70. (Holotype: adult, male, skin and skull, Number 1665, Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia.)
- 1894. *Neotoma desertorum sola* Merriam, Proc. Biol. Soc. Washington, 9:126. (Lectotype: adult, male, skin only, Number 31516, United States National Museum of Natural History.)
- 1932. *Neotoma lepida gilva* Goldman, J. Mamm., 13:63.

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